**Background**

Twenty-five mass shootings\* have occurred since 2006. 12 people were killed in the Aurora, Colorado movie theatre shootings in July 2012. A gunman killed 7 at a Sikh temple in August 2012. 28 students and teachers were killed in the Newtown shootings in December 2012. Most recently, a gunman killed 12 at a Washington, D.C. Naval Yard on September 16, 2013. These tragic events have renewed the debate regarding the interpretation of the Second Amendment. Government officials, special interest groups, and the American public have contributed to this dialogue, although a consensus has yet to be reached. In this assignment, we will debate whether America needs more gun control legislation or whether we should loosen restrictions on firearms.

**Task**

1. Students will be divided into research and debate teams.
   1. Team 1: High profile shootings are reasons to increase gun control.
   2. Team 2: High profile shootings are reasons to loosen restrictions on firearms.
2. Each team will begin researching their position using the debate organizer below and taking the “Questions to Consider” into consideration.
3. Debate organizers will be due on Tuesday, October 1. The debate will also take place on Tuesday, October 1.
4. Students will receive a grade based on their research and their performance in the debate. A scored discussion rubric will be used to grade student performance during the debate.

**Questions to Consider**

1. What right does the Second Amendment to the Constitution protect?  Do you think this protection is necessary? Why or why not?
2. Why did the Founders include the Second Amendment in the Bill of Rights?  Do you think that their reasons are still valid today? Why or why not?
3. What has the Supreme Court ruled about the meaning of the Second Amendment? Do you agree with their reasoning and conclusions?
4. What types of restrictions have local and state governments put on weapons?  What laws have local and state governments proposed?  Do you support or oppose these restrictions?  Explain
5. What laws would you propose regarding gun control?  How do you think the public would react to your ideas?
6. Why do you think gun control is controversial?

**Suggested Resources:**

* [President Obama’s Gun Control Proposal](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/wh_now_is_the_time_full.pdf)
* [The NRA’s Institute for Legislative Action](http://home.nra.org/nraila)
* [Illinois Gun Laws Overview](http://www.nraila.org/gun-laws/state-laws/illinois.aspx)
* [Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence](http://www.bradycampaign.org/)

**Debate Notes Organizer**

My argument is that:    
 

Evidence that supports my argument:   
 

 

Evidence against my argument:    
 

   
   
Rebuttal to evidence against my argument: